(f) by when the Ministry is likely to issue instructions in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b) The Government have constituted an Expert Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. R.A. Mashelkar, Director General, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) to recommend an Auto Fuel Policy, for the country. The Expert Committee has made, *inter-alia*, the following recommendations in its Interim Report:—

* The recommended Auto Fuel Policy is based on targeted vehicular emission standards for various categories of vehicles, allowing use of different technologies and fuels, which can meet the emission standards. In the developed world and elsewhere, vehicular emission standards and auto fuel quality necessary to meet the standards alone are prescribed, giving choice to the public, manufacturers, owners and operators of motor vehicles to choose the vehicle type and the fuel. The Committee recommends that the same policy be adopted for India.

* The Government should decide only the vehicular emission standards and the corresponding fuel specifications without specifying vehicle technology and the type of fuel.

The recommendations of the Committee have been accepted by the Government on 8.1.2002

(c) No, Sir.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) and (f) Do not arise in view of above.

Crude oil production by Russia

5074. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Russia is set to overtake Saudi Arabia in crude production;

(b) whether this strategic advantage to be wrested by Russia will be beneficial to consuming economies like India and China and whether India has never been comfortable with the OPEC cartel controlled by Saudi Arabia; and

(c) whether Indian refineries do not have the technical capacity to process heavy Russian crude and if so, in what manner India gains from Russia's abundance in crude oil?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) Russian production of crude oil has been marginally more than that of Saudi Arabia in February, 2002. As per 'Oil Marketing Report' published by the Paris based International Energy Agency, in its April' 02 edition, the estimated crude oil production by Saudi Arabia (excluding Neutral Zone) was about 7.15 million barrels per day in March' 02 while actual in February' 02 was 6.91 million barrels per day. The production figure for Russia during this period was 7.32 million barrels per day estimated for March' 02 and 7 35 million barrels per day actual for February' 02.

(b) OPEC countries are important suppliers of crude oil to India. However, increased production of crude oil by Russia will be beneficial to the consuming economies as this may result in a corresponding increase in supply of crude oil to the market.

(c) Indian refineries have technical capability of processing Russian crude oils and some of the refineries have identified Russian grade for trial processing. However, due to long haul and transportation disadvantage through Suez Canal, the grade was never competitive in our system compared to other grades in the basket of acceptable crude oils.

Conditions for marketing of petroleum products

5075. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have allowed nine companies to market petroleum products after administered price mechanisam is dismantled from April 1, 2002;

(b) if so, the names of the companies;

(c) the conditions to be fulfilled by these companies for the purpose; and

(d) the other details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) to (d) Government have not granted authorization to market transportation fuels to any new entrant, so far. However, Government have laid down the guidelines for granting authorization to market transportation fuels to the new entrants vide its resolution dated 8th March, 2002.